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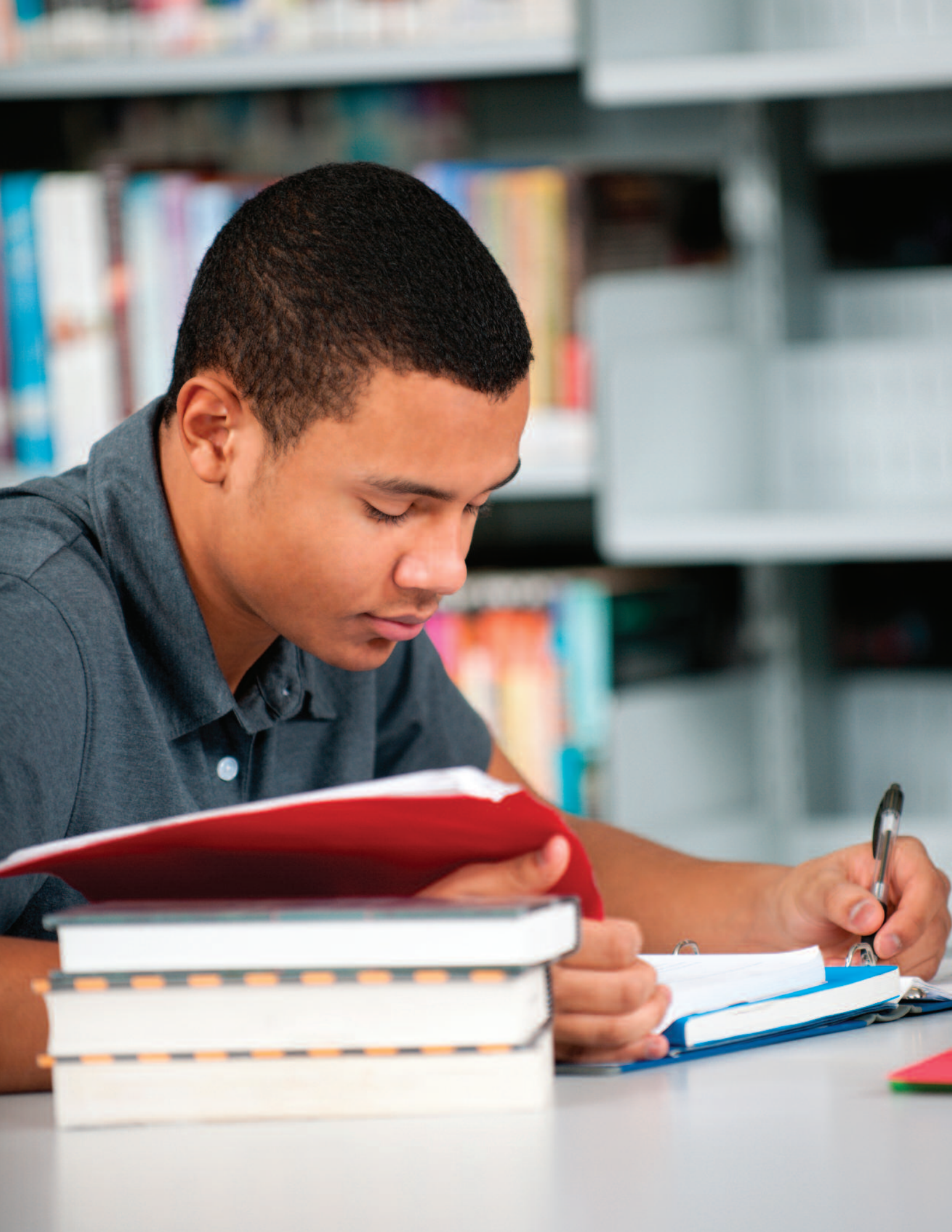
Insight

Summer 2012

Setting the Tables: An Inquiry into Commissions Targeting Males of Color



A Review of Current GCYF Topics and Issues



Grantmakers for Children, Youth & Families

Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families (GCYF) is a membership association of grantmaking institutions.

The mission of GCYF is to engage funders across all sectors to continually improve their grantmaking on behalf of children, youth, and families.

GCYF serves as a forum to review and analyze grantmaking strategies, exchange information about effective programs, examine public policy developments, and maintain ongoing discussions with national leaders.

Representatives of more than 500 private, corporate, community, and family foundations of all sizes participate in GCYF events and programs. Member interests range from the development of public policies benefiting children to specific program areas, such as early childhood, youth development, and family support. Those who participate in GCYF are a diverse group, ranging from trustees to executive directors to program officers.

About the Authors

Frontline Solutions (helpingchange happen.com) is a social change organization that invests in the pipeline of social change leaders, provides consulting services to nonprofit organizations, and engages in field building in the areas of education, social innovation, and males of color.

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A Message from GCYF's Executive Director

By Stephanie McGencey, Ph.D., MPH

Executive Director, Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families



Dear Colleagues:

Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families (GCYF) has always been dedicated to ensuring informed grantmaking that best supports positive, long-term outcomes for children, youth, and families. We do this by providing comprehensive research, resources, knowledge-based insight, and perspective in our ongoing support of local, regional, and national member and colleague organizations. Accordingly, this issue of *Insight* “sets the table” for grantmakers by informing them about the work of commissions throughout the country that target males of color. In *Setting the Tables: An Inquiry Into Commissions Targeting Males of Color*, Frontline Solutions provides a timely presentation of the results of the work of these commissions, their programs and policies designed to target males of color.

This report, while not exhaustive, provides an understanding of commissions of color, their best practices, and the impact of these practices on males of color at the community level and through policy. It discusses the role of philanthropy and offers suggestions for how grantmakers, committed to the enduring well-being of children and families, can strategically engage, practice, lead, and invest philanthropic dollars to improve the disproportionately negative life outcomes of marginalized males of color.

The economic crisis and ongoing challenges in the foundation and public sector have provided challenges to GCYF and its members, but also have opened doors for opportunities in strategic partnerships, alliances, and comradeship. GCYF's Healthy Men, Healthy Communities (HMHC) Initiative is a network of grantmaking institutions committed to increasing the strategic investment of philanthropic dollars to reduce the disproportionately negative life outcomes of men and boys of color and low-income communities. GCYF has applied the lessons learned from the inception of HMHC to mobilize the philanthropic community to address the needs of marginalized males, establish effective strategies that promote healthy male involvement in families and communities, and leverage philanthropic investments and strategies to help advance public funding streams that target healthy men and healthy community outcomes.

We have a unique opportunity to build on the foundation of previous work targeting males of color and engage diverse stakeholders across the ideological spectrum, to leverage our collective strengths to lead a movement that achieves long-term social change for men and boys of color and their communities. GCYF welcomes the opportunity to expand upon this important work by continuing engagements with children, youth, and family grantmakers; our federal government; national organizations; and nonprofit colleagues. And we hope that you will add your voice to these important discussions.

Philanthropically yours,

Stephanie McGencey, Ph.D., MPH

Executive Director

Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families



FOREWORD: Philanthropy's Journey to Healthy Men, Healthy Communities

Although disparate life outcomes between males of color and other groups have long been prominent across a spectrum of indices, only during the past 4 years has the philanthropic sector demonstrated a “keen interest” in this population. This interest has taken several forms. Some foundations have engaged in strategic grantmaking targeting improved life outcomes of males of color, others have (or are currently) engaged in an exploration in this area. Still others have created institutional task forces and learning groups.

Much of philanthropy’s explicit work and investments in males of color has focused specifically on African American males. There has been significantly less philanthropic activity, or even explorations, targeting males of Asian, Latino, or Native American descent. Although there has been some symposia, grants, and writing within philanthropy on targeting males of color, there has been little to no framing that has teased out the causal and outcomes differences (and similarities) between disparities experienced by African American males compared to their Latino, Asian, or Native counterparts.

Philanthropy’s attempt to improve the life outcomes of males of color provides a critical backdrop for the most recent iteration of philanthropic movement around life outcomes of marginalized males. The philanthropic investments targeting African American males in the 1990s coincided with the Million Man March in 1995. Although this period (1993–1997) was important, it proved to not be very sustainable.¹ The philanthropic investments in the 1990s never quite gained traction within the sector, which may have served as a disincentive for the future of philanthropy’s support of this work.

In 2003 and 2004, four foundations began to implement clear philanthropic strategies targeting Black men and boys. The Chicago Community Trust launched its African American Family initiative, which included a specific strategy targeting Black men and boys. The Mitchell Kapor Foundation commissioned an overview and exploration of how its grantmaking could best improve educational outcomes of Black males. The Schott Foundation released the report *Public Education and Black Male Students: The 2004 State Report Card*. Twenty-First Century Foundation (21CF), with the support of the Ford Foundation, launched a grantmaking initiative targeting Black male outcomes. The efforts and analyses of these foundations came at a time when most of the larger

philanthropic institutions were not explicitly investing in Black males.

In 2006, Erick Eckholm’s article, “Plight Deepens for Black Men, Studies Warn,” published in the *New York Times*, renewed philanthropic interest in Black males. The Ford Foundation’s then–Program Officer, Loren Harris, and the Open Society Institute’s then–Program Officer, Alvin Starks, separately began an attempt to mobilize institutional resources and other philanthropic partners to strategize how to address the Black male disparities highlighted in Eckholm’s article. Over the next 2 years, the sector commenced to convene, learn, research, and strategize. Seminal research on how the sector could respond was released, while research from academia began to help inform evolving philanthropic strategies.² More than 100 foundations participated in strategy sessions and convenings that sought to identify sustainable opportunities for philanthropy to respond to the disparately negative outcomes of Black males.³

In 2008, there were signs that philanthropy’s interest may extend beyond the exploration phase. The 2025 Campaign, launched by 21CF, began to grow in its prominence within the sector; Ford Foundation invested in key research conducted by Columbia University and the University of Michigan; and practitioner (Brotherhood/Sistersol, Men Can Stop Rape, and the Masculinity Project) and philanthropic (21CF) organizations helped advance, lead, and develop model practices and strategies to empower and support this marginalized population. In addition, Open Society Foundations (formerly the Open Society Institute) launched a significant commitment to this work by launching a multiyear grantmaking initiative, the Campaign for Black Male Achievement.

In 2009, the sector continued to grow and build a body of work that will hopefully serve as the infrastructure for growing long-term commitment in the philanthropic sector to marginalized males. In 2010 and 2011, sector leaders have become increasingly intentional about presenting a frame that is broader than Black males, but also inclusive of other males of color and marginalized male populations. This has been an important evolution in analysis for the work, in that it has provided an opportunity for more philanthropic institutions to engage. 2009 was also the first full year for the Marginalized Males Funders Group (MMFG), a Ford Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies–supported venue designed to support,

inform, and equip foundation staff to increase philanthropic investments to improve the well-being of men and boys of color. This network emerged from a number of formal and informal foundation convenings designated to address this issue over the past 3 years. MMFG has aimed to provide an open space for funders seeking to understand how direct service, research, advocacy, movement building, and other field-building tools can affect efforts to achieve long-term social change for marginalized males and their communities.

In 2010 and 2011, the philanthropic sector's investment in males of color continued to grow and deepen. The California Endowment, Heinz Endowment, Knight Foundation, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, California Community Foundation, and other philanthropies designated dollars and demonstrated commitments explicitly to males of color populations. In addition, the sector has strengthened its infrastructure to mobilize and engage philanthropy to continue to deepen its investment in males of color.

In 2010, MMFG changed its name and positioned itself to not just be a support for the building of this work within the sector, but also to help the work to advance and grow in order to maximally leverage philanthropy to impact the quality of life for marginalized males. Healthy Men, Healthy Communities (HMHC), as it was called, was launched as a multiyear initiative of Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families (GCYF).

This initiative has become a vital part of GCYF's efforts to improve grantmaking on behalf of vulnerable children, youth, and families. Some GCYF members are currently investing in efforts to address the educational, health, and social-emotional needs of young men of color. Through this initiative, GCYF brings all of these funders together and has significantly expanded the scope of the MMFG network to include other populations currently supported by GCYF members (i.e., men and boys that live in rural areas, low-income communities in urban areas, and other marginalized communities). Highlights of this work are included in Appendix A.

Bolstered by regional meetings, conference calls, and the growing numbers of philanthropic leaders and institutions demonstrating commitment to this work, GCYF serves as a learning and mobilization venue for funders regardless of their specific areas of grantmaking. Through GCYF, they seek to understand how direct service, research, policy analysis, community advocacy, movement building, and other field-building tools can impact efforts to achieve long-term social change for men and boys of color and their communities.

The following is the Initiative's mission:


Healthy Men, Healthy Communities Initiative is a network of grantmaking institutions and individual donors committed

to increasing the strategic investment of philanthropic dollars to improve the disproportionately negative life outcomes of men and boys of color and/or those who live in rural and urban areas.

The primary goals of the Initiative are:

1. To mobilize the philanthropic community to address the needs of marginalized males.
2. To establish effective strategies that promote healthy male involvement in communities and families.
3. To leverage philanthropic investments and strategies to help catalyze healthy men and healthy communities with public- and private-sector resources.

These goals are designed to achieve the following intended outcomes:

1. Increase commitment of philanthropic leadership to invest in targeted research, policy, and practice strategies that promote positive outcomes for men and boys of color and low-income communities.
2. Establish an accessible information resource that builds capacity of philanthropic and public sector leaders to improve life outcomes for men and boys of color and low-income communities.
3. Increase public and philanthropic partnerships explicitly targeting improving life outcomes for men and boys of color and low-income communities.
4. Increase philanthropic investments in programs targeting young males that promote and target increased educational attainment, healthy lifestyles, equitable juvenile justice systems, and access to work and work supports. 

References

- ¹ Littles, M., Bowers, R., & Gilmer, M. (2007). *Why We Can't Wait — A Case for Philanthropic Action: Opportunities for Improving Life Outcomes of African American Males*. New York, NY: The Ford Foundation.
- ² Examples of seminal research that made an impact at this moment include *Momentum: Sustaining Efforts to Improve Life-Outcomes Among African American Males* and Alford Young's (2004, 2006) *The Minds of Marginalized Black Men: Making Sense of Mobility, Opportunity, and Future Life Chances*. Significant here is the fact that relevant research began to come from philanthropic investments, and this research began to inform philanthropies' strategies in their work on Black males. See *Works Cited* for more information about these sources.
- ³ Foundations, such as the Association for Black Foundation Executives and the Ford Foundation, began to sponsor formal and informal strategy sessions and convenings offering venues for this sector to begin organizing itself.



Introduction

In February 2010, Twenty-First Century Foundation published *The State of Black Male Commissions: A Survey*, a report that documented the practices, strategies, and achievements of government agencies created to improve the status and well-being of Black men and boys. The publication began an exploration of these agencies, generally known as “commissions,” which served to positively and structurally influence local and state outcomes for Black males. Included in the report is a brief history of commissions and their various compositions as well as a thoughtful assessment of the promise and pitfalls of commissions from the perspective of a select group of experts working in the males of color field.

The State of Black Male Commissions (2010) outlines a broad history of commissions in this country, and explains that, although their initiation by executive order suggests they are government-sanctioned, their independent status often stands as a distinguishing characteristic. In fact, they are sometimes referred to as “the fifth arm of government,” a designation that suggests a governmental balance in which the fourth arm, made up of the media and citizenry, and the fifth arm, operating as a government–citizen partnership, work to ensure the accountability of the other arms of government representing the main three.

Commissions have been the impetus of policy innovations and reforms, as well as examples of stagnation and ineffectiveness. In either case, commissions merely represent one of the ways in which society organizes around a table. World War II produced what is perhaps the most recognized of such tables in the modern era. In 1942, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt famously dubbed 26 unified countries as the “United Nations”; the “Declaration by United Nations,” was their pledge to continue fighting together against “the Axis Powers.” The table that evolved from this alliance is now the table for international diplomacy.

There are many organized tables like the United Nations (UN). And, like the UN, they are all imperfect. Nothing about their composition or structure guarantees a certain impact, be it magic or mixed results. Commissions are just one of many examples of organized tables where ideas, strategies, movements, and innovations come to life . . . or die a slow death.

Healthy Men, Healthy Communities (HMHC) is an organized table created by Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families (GCYF). It exists to mobilize the philanthropic community to *increase the strategic investment of philanthropic dollars to improve the disproportionately negative life outcomes of men and boys of color and/or those who live in rural and urban areas*. As GCYF continues to convene, support, and organize HMHC as a mission-driven table in the philanthropic sector, it endeavors to assemble information, research, ideas, resources, and reconnaissance that can help equip, support, and engage philanthropy to strategically invest in improving the life outcomes of males of color.

This report is an inquiry of both the promise and the challenges that commissions provide as organized tables in cities and states, whose aims are to advance policies, practices, and conditions that provide better life outcomes for these subpopulations. To perform this inquiry, this report explores the following questions:

- *What are the commissions' narratives? Specifically, how have they operated in local contexts?*
- *What is philanthropy's relationship to these commissions?*
- *What can philanthropic institutions committed to males of color learn from these commissions?*
- *What opportunities exist to support these organized tables in advancing policy and effective practice?*

We contend that, at its most ineffective, philanthropy acts as “lone wolf,” addressing seemingly intractable issues in isolation. However, the medium of philanthropy offers the opportunity and position to act collaboratively, investing in and helping to sustain organized tables.

HMHC is committed to mobilizing the philanthropic sector to invest in turning the tables of opportunity for males of color. We hope that this report provides relevant information and continues a conversation that explores strategic opportunities for philanthropy to consider toward this end. ✦

Table Narratives

Local efforts to address the myriad of barriers impeding the life outcomes of males of color vary in strategies employed and in form. Such variations are based on region or geography, local leadership and politics, the history of a given place, or any number of other characteristics of a given place. In this effort to better understand the roles and impacts of commissions on improving life opportunities for males of color, a set of narratives emerged to describe how *commissions are working and how they are not working*. This report describes commissions as “tables,” and uses narratives to offer analyses and stories that highlight common characteristics, mixed results, and a spectrum of barriers and opportunities for philanthropy to consider as it assists in organizing these tables as effective venues to address disparities experienced by males of color.

Before continuing on to the table narratives, the reader should be aware of several points. First, note that no official definition for males of color–focused commissions exists. However, for the purposes of this report, a *commission* refers to a group formed or authorized by a government body to conduct long-term work focused toward solving specific issues affecting males of color. This report also recognizes other commission-like bodies as performing the work of commissions, and from this point forth all such entities will be referred to as commissions, unless otherwise noted. Second, the table narratives in this report reflect the diversity of origins and scopes of the commissions included. Consequently, a commission may not sit at just one table, but may demonstrate aspects of multiple table narratives. Finally, these table narratives were created based upon data collected from commissions’ reports, web sites, and interviews with numerous commission members and staff. Some interviewees spoke with researchers based on a promise of anonymity, but requested that their comments be included. Subsequently, these interviewees are not identified by name. See Appendix B for a profile on each commission, and Appendix C for a full description of the methodology behind these narratives.

The Balanced Table

In the 2010 report, *A Survey of Black Male Commissions*, Loren Harris writes:

As an extension of government, commissions have the potential to extend the heft of a branch or unit of government; and, in so doing, lend instant credibility to activities of the commission. The promise of this capacity can be fully realized when local stakeholders hold commissions accountable to the primary needs [of males of color]⁴.

The effective commission that Harris envisions can be likened to a balanced table. Such a commission is a table with mutual accountability. It is vested in by—and accountable to—a community constituency, as well as policymakers and senior-level state- or local-level bureaucrats. Therefore, in this scenario, the commission is being held accountable by both the system it seeks to change, and the community impacted by its success. The alternative scenario is one where accountability is a one-way street.

In 2009, Oakland’s school superintendent, Dr. Anthony Smith, initiated the Oakland Unified School District’s (OUSD’s) African American Male Achievement Task Force. This commission operates as an organized body that is accountable to the public will of the local community, and is mandated to make change by the school system. It balances and aligns the priorities and actions of both a system and the community to improve the life outcomes of Black boys. The emergence of this task force included several strategic decisions by Dr. Smith and his colleagues that were key in helping develop a balanced and mutually accountable table:

- The research and development that informed the focus areas of the task force was a process jointly owned by school district officials and community advocates. The district held community meetings and parent cafés, and interviewed Black boys. This process comprised both data gathering and recruitment of task force members.
- The task force initiated a process that promoted transparency of best and worst practices in providing quality education for Black boys in the OUSD. The task force oversaw an audit on OUSD, looked at school instruction practices, and reviewed discipline strategies at each school. The task force demonstrated its commitment to accountability by exposing its blind spots.
- After the audit identified a set of best practices, the task force went a step further and succeeded in having the school board vote on these best practices. The key to this step was a balanced table that is comprised of members with access and political capital to help make certain that the school board consider its recommendations.

Commissions take many shapes, sizes, and forms; however, an important narrative is that of mutual accountability at the Balanced Table. Although the process of acquiring buy-in and active participation from all parties requires hard work, constant



communication, and time, such tables are well positioned to impact the lives of males of color.

The Leased Table

Whether it is a vehicle or real estate, there is one very basic description of the difference between leasing and owning: the car or apartment is for your use, but it is *not really yours*. Similarly, some commission or task force members have experienced the challenge of gathering around a table and an issue that they each owned personally, only to realize that the commission or table that they gathered around was ultimately a leased vehicle.

Some commissions are initiated via executive order (by a mayor or governor) or via legislation (by the state legislature). Sometimes, the specific origin of a commission can be inconsequential; however, in other cases, the person or body initiating the commission limits the degree of ownership that commission participants can claim.

The Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men & Boys is currently facing some of the challenges of a Leased Table. The Council seeks to identify and assist with the implementation of programs and services that will improve the lives of Black men and boys through sound practices in the fields of education, health, family, economics, and criminal justice. It was formed in 2007 by the Florida state legislature, and championed by Senators Frederica Wilson and Frank Peterman, in response to negative life outcomes of Black males in Florida. The ultimate goal of the Council is to create policy change by offering actionable recommendations to the legislatures and lawmakers.⁵

The Council is comprised of a variety of community and subject area experts, including law enforcement, psychologists, correctional staff, and counselors. Some members serve a 1-year term, whereas others serve for 2 years. By mandate, a certain number of the members must come from the community and some must be a part of state or local government departments and are appointed by the state senate.

Similarly, the Illinois Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men has experienced barriers resulting, in part, from shifts in state government leadership. Former Taskforce Chair Terrance Mitchell explains, “When the governor that signed the bill was arrested, everything he signed was seen as tainted. Even though the vote passed in the legislature unanimously, the connection to the Governor’s office presented a significant roadblock that has been difficult to recover from.”⁶

The Florida Council and the Illinois Taskforce have each been able to mobilize a wide variety of members and evidence a

set of policy impacts. However, as the state government administrations shifted (state legislature – house and senate – and governor) over the past several years, it has raised some considerable challenges for the progress of the Council, including the following:

- The lack of responsiveness of members by the new state-elected officials has created a bottleneck in the Council’s operations. Newly elected officials are responsible for appointing new Council members, but some of the new elected officials are not willing to attend the quarterly meetings, nor have they appointed new members to represent them on the Council.
- The structure of the Council mandates checks and balances in decisionmaking for the Council. It also mandates that government and community be represented at a certain level in order to vote on key decisions. And since government representatives in the new administrations have been notably absent, community representatives have observed diminishing returns in the venue of the Council as it cannot make decisions without the appropriate quorum.

The Louisiana Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys and the newly commissioned taskforce in Philadelphia are other examples of commissions created by executive order or legislation. And just as leasing a car or an apartment is not an ill-advised notion in a categorical sense, commissions that are created via legislation or executive order are not inherently limited in their abilities to be effective. In fact, because executive and legislative bodies create these commissions, they are well-positioned to directly impact policy change. However, the experience recounted by the Florida Council and others serve as cautionary narratives about how the structures, governance, and composition of commissions can influence their agendas and ability for action.

The Kitchen Table

One of the forms and functions of commissions has been to provide a connecting point for organizations, service providers, activists, and scholars committed to improving the life outcomes for males of color. It is analogous to the Kitchen Table in some family constructs and traditions. In some households, the kitchen table serves as a venue where family members connect, share stories, develop ideas, and even have difficult conversations. Likewise, some commissions live out a Kitchen Table narrative, creating a natural hub for practitioners, policymakers, and scholars invested in ameliorating disparate outcomes for males of color.

The Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs is a state agency that focuses on three key mandates: (1) to advise the governor of Ohio and state legislators on issues that concern Latinos, (2) to connect Latino organizations in the state, and (3) to provide capacity building for Latino individuals and organizations. The Ohio Commission does not exclusively support and advocate for Latino males; however, “Latino men are definitely one of our areas of concern and interest,” says Lilliena Cavanaugh, executive director of the Commission.⁷ The Ohio Commission serves as a Kitchen Table for organizations and policies aiming to support Latino males.

The Ohio Commission is a statewide entity that provides a place for Latino male-serving organizations to connect, and share resources, practices, and strategies. The Commission created the Latino Community Network, which connects more than 250 Hispanic and Hispanic-serving organizations throughout the state. In addition, it serves as the host for The Bridgebuilders Forum, which brings together 500 Latino males across the state, and gives them an opportunity to visit Ohio State University and encourages them to pursue higher education.⁸

Similarly, the Marginalized Males Workforce and Education Consortium (MMWEC) is a collection of Arkansas-based nonprofit, higher education, and state agency partners concerned with the educational and workforce outcomes for males of color in Arkansas. MMWEC provides a venue for its participants to share practices and exchange ideas. MMWEC gathers relevant national research and opportunities and shares them as resources to network members.⁹

As these examples help illustrate, commissions take many forms. Some endeavor to reform policies, others to gather research, and still others seek to strengthen practice by providing a learning community for organizations that share the same target population. The Ohio Commission and MMWEC are two examples of commissions that function as Kitchen Tables for various efforts in their states, aiming to improve the life outcomes for Latino males and males of color, respectively.

The Broad Table and the Narrow Table

Each commission has a distinct history, its own unique story of how it came to be and how it operates now. Each narrative embodies a combination of intentional planning and evolutionary adaptation. However, in each commission that this report explores, the primary actors had to make an early decision regarding the type of table it wanted to be. In some cases, commissions endeavored to be multi-issue and holistic in their approach to supporting males of color. Examples of these Broad Tables include The Florida Council on the Social Status of

Black Men & Boys and the Illinois Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men.

In other cases, commissions choose to be targeted and specific in their approach. Examples of these issue-specific approaches include the Milwaukee African American Male Unemployment Task Force and the aforementioned Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) African American Male Achievement Task Force. Similarly, the Gang Reduction Initiative of Denver targets youth violence,¹⁰ while Louisville’s African American Male Empowerment Network (AMEN) is an initiative to empower men to develop healthy lifestyle changes through a series of support groups, facilitated by the Association of Black Psychologists.¹¹

The Broad Table and the Narrow Table each has pros and cons. The Florida Council grew out of a complex analysis: the lagging life outcomes of African American males was impacting the broader community, specifically forcing a large number of African American women to become single parents, which in turn impeded their economic and social upward mobility. Thus, core to the Council’s strategy is to create a venue where policymakers and service providers in multiple fields—education, health, family, economics, and criminal justice—engage around a common table to identify and develop policy solutions together. Council Chair Dr. Eddy M. Regnier noted that the intersectional and holistic approach that the Florida Council has taken recognizes that the barriers and opportunities of Black males are not “compartmentalized by issue.” However, inhabiting such a Broad Table has also been a part of the challenge to the Council’s ability to keep representatives from each issue area engaged, and to identify financial resources that support such an ambitious agenda.¹²

Embodying a Narrow Table, The Milwaukee African American Male Unemployment Task Force was created in 2010 to address the disparate levels of unemployment experienced by African American males in Milwaukee. This commission, developed by a local alderman, maintains a laserlike focus on helping create jobs for Black males in Milwaukee. The commission’s focus is targeted and easy to communicate to potential funders and community constituents. The short-term goal is singular and simple, “get as many jobs as possible for Black males in Milwaukee,” according¹³ to the Taskforce Co-Chair, Alderman Ashanti Hamilton. However, the long-term goals go beyond the stated short-term mission and include parental involvement in schools, education reform, and poverty alleviation. The Milwaukee example evidences the interconnectedness of the issue facing males of color, and highlights the challenges and nuanced approach required to engage a single issue impacting a population.



The Broad Table and the Narrow Table each provide obvious and less predictable opportunities and challenges. However, whether a commission is multi-issue or singularly focused, it is imperative that it has an operative understanding of the costs and assets that accompany each strategy.

The Reincarnated Table

The timeless adage from the Book of Ecclesiastes, “There is nothing new under the sun,” continues to prove true. Emerging state and local commissions targeting life outcomes of males of color are in no way new ideas or enterprises. In *The State of Black Male Commissions* (2010), the authors referenced the first such commission, which formed in April 1989 in Ohio as the Governor’s Commission on Socially Disadvantaged Black Males.

Not only are these commissions not new concepts, but in some localities, the recently created commissions are also reincarnations of previous efforts. Christopher Chatmon, director of OUSD’s African American Male Achievement Task Force, explained the history of education task forces aimed at Black boys in Oakland. “A lawsuit by Oscar Wright challenged the Oakland school board and advocated for a task force like this, and in 1992 a similar task force was created,” he said. “Oakland African American Education Task Force was the original body. Their report came out in 1996, and it included recommendations for Oakland schools.”¹⁴

When Chatmon first accepted the position as director of OUSD’s Task Force, he immediately began interviewing superintendents and people who were a part of the previous task force effort. These interviews uncovered challenges and barriers regarding how the previous commission operated, such as a lack of buy-in by the school board and a lack of mutual accountability among school board, school leaders, and community advocates. The Reincarnated Table in the form of OUSD’s African American Male Achievement Task Force explicitly and proactively composed itself in ways that built upon the lessons learned during the previous effort.

There have been more than a few iterations of state, local, and national commissions targeting males of color (most have been focused exclusively on Black males), since the first such commission in Ohio in 1989. As commissions continue to emerge in cities and states throughout the country in response to some of the stark disparities in life outcomes experienced by males of color, it is important that they know of and learn from previous ones. In some cases, a commission can look at its own city or state history for detailed lessons about how to organize effective (and ineffective) commissions and task forces.

Philadelphia offers a useful example. On September 15, 2011, Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter signed an executive order

reestablishing the Mayor’s Commission on African American Males.¹⁵ The commission was first formed under then-Mayor W. Wilson Goode, Sr. in 1991. The most recent iteration was informed as the result of a community process and report developed in 2010 by the mayor, Philadelphia’s district attorney, the then-chair of the school board, and local community leaders.¹⁶

Mayor Nutter reestablished the commission to address issues related to unemployment, incarceration, lack of education, and health within the African American male community—as various reports indicate that Black male well-being is lagging behind that of their ethnic and racial counterparts on most major indicators. Recently released Census 2010 figures underscore the fact that the well-being of Philadelphia’s African American citizens will have a major impact on the city, as African Americans now outnumber all other ethnic groups in Philadelphia, largely due to the mass exodus of more than 82,000 Whites to the suburbs since 1990.¹⁷ However, more and more middle- and working-class African Americans are also leaving the city for Philadelphia’s suburbs, where the African American population has increased 26 percent or 47,000.

The Mayor’s Commission on African American Males, which includes 30 men spanning multiple generations, had its first meeting in November 2011. Members of the commission will serve without compensation and will submit to the mayor an annual report on the state of African American males in Philadelphia, focusing on tangible recommendations. The co-chairs of the Commission are former Mayor Goode Sr., who now heads Amachi, an education nonprofit; Bilal Qayyum, president of the Father’s Day Rally Committee Inc.; and Jamar Izzard, a radio host at 107.9.

As Mayor Nutter works with community leaders to establish this task force aimed at improving life outcomes of Black males, it is important to look at the successes and failures of the similarly framed commission enacted by former Mayor Goode’s administration 20 years earlier. Indeed, there is “nothing new under the sun,” and so there exists constructive and accessible opportunities to learn from past efforts. By learning from previous mistakes or missteps, and organizing differently, Reincarnated Tables offer effective mediums to influence the life outcomes for males of color.

The Missing Tables

This examination of commissions targeting improved outcomes for males of color found no commissions specifically and exclusively focused on Latino males, Asian/Pacific Islander males, or Native American males. In terms of commissions as venues for mobilizing publics to address the disparities for men

of color, significantly more of these tables were organized around Black males than they were around other minority group men and boys. Although commissions for Latino and Native American/Indian affairs were found in some states, including Oklahoma and Iowa,¹⁸ none of these commissions appeared to specifically target the males of these minority groups.

Further examination revealed four organizations that serve Latinos, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans. These organizations were contacted to see if their staff worked with or could identify commissions that focused on males within these communities. Researchers contacted and conducted interviews with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Council of La Raza, the National Congress of American Indians, and the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development. In each individual investigation, the team searched these organizations' web sites to identify any connections with males of color commissions, as well as engaged in e-mail and phone discussions with key personnel regarding any program, initiative, task force, or commission that focused solely on males of color. The research team then referred to each organization's list of affiliates to search for programs, initiatives, task forces, and commissions under the same criteria previously used. No men of color commissions for Latinos, Asian and Pacific Islanders, or Native American males were identified through these investigations.

Subsequently, the research team expanded its search to commission-like entities, such as The College Board's Advocacy & Policy Center, in order to identify other organized bodies that had a mission to target these subpopulations and influence local, state, and nationwide policy. Although the College Board is not a commission, it proved to be the most credible and referenced research source that disaggregated specific data on educational outcomes of Asian American, Latino, and Native American males.


Several interviewees saw similarities in how males of color in various racial and ethnic groups experienced barriers and disparities, and discussed this common ground as a great place to begin coalition building. In fact, these coalitions were seen as vital for gaining large public support for policy changes that affect all communities of color. However, interviewees such as Executive Director Lilliena Cavanaugh of The Ohio Commission for Hispanic/Latino Affairs, encouraged commissions to pay attention to cultural differences, offer recommendations that are "culturally appropriate," and ensure that this was a piece of the conversation taking place at the table.

For example, Ohio's Commission for Hispanic/Latino Affairs has been able to work across differences and partner with Asian, Pacific Islander, African, and Middle Eastern immigrants throughout the state. The commission has successfully helped

community organizations acquire philanthropic support from agencies that want to invest in these "New Americans." However, Cavanaugh cautions that each partnership needs to make sense, and argues that it is imperative that the Ohio Commission and the partnering community organizations be cognizant of the ways policies of immigration and migration affect these groups differently.¹⁹ Furthermore, Cavanaugh emphasizes the need for all involved to pay attention to the diversity of Latino communities throughout the state because of differences in geographic location, country of origin, education level, housing opportunities, employment, and language barriers. While recognizing that many see Latinos as one community, the commission is consistently cognizant of the ways this diversity in the Latino community affects how coalitions are built, how recommendations for policy change are made, and the methods used for advocacy.²⁰

Cavanaugh points out that these attempts to work with similarities in experiences and across differences can become a huge capacity issue. She states, "Any conversation cannot be seen as globally involving every Latino in Ohio. It needs to be a region-based conversation because they're dealing with different issues."²¹ While addressing the massive scope of migration work, and why the commission does not have a males of color initiative Cavanaugh continues, "The phenomenon of migration is new [and we are working on issues related to this] so, there are not a lot of established leaders who can take this [male initiative] on their shoulders. They are in survival mode."

From Cavanaugh's comments, and the research completed, it can be concluded that there is a notable scarcity of commissions targeting improving life outcomes of males of color, particularly those in the Latino, Asian, and Native American communities. Grantmakers that are committed to males of color should explore the question of why organized tables to address outcome disparities of Asian American, Latino, and Native American males are scarce. These tables are missing, and disparities

continue to exist. Where are the apparatus and institutions serving and supporting the specific needs and barriers experienced by these populations of males? And what could new commissions targeting these populations teach philanthropy about the similarities and differences between these varied populations of males of color? 

References

- ⁴ Frontline Solutions. (2010). *The state of Black male commissions: A survey*. New York, NY: Twenty-First Century Foundation. Page 5.
- ⁵ Interview, August 8, 2011.

(Table Narratives continues on page 16)

Recommendations for Existing and Emerging Males of Color Commissions

Conversations with commission representatives and funders produced the following ideas and recommendations for males of color-focused commissions in their efforts to have more impact on their target populations:

1. Reassess infrastructure models to ensure that your commission is not limited or thwarted by changing government administrations and political agendas.

A frequently cited challenge of commissions is their inability to effectively remain intact and on target through a transfer of power in government, or through changes in political will and agendas. Commissions could be discharged with the stroke of a pen, or lose community support by inextricably being linked to a scandal or the unpopular actions of a local government official. As noted previously, the tension between being independent yet closely tied to government sometimes limits power and stunts possibilities for a commission's effectiveness. Therefore, in developing commission infrastructures, it is vital to anticipate public sector leadership changes.

2. Develop more diverse and long-term funding models.

Funding is a significant challenge for commissions because funding resources are almost always significantly limited or completely absent in the legislative mandate. Several commissions, such as the Florida Council on the Social Status of Men & Boys, have small administrative budgets and no other funds allocated to implement the recommendations the commission offered. Dr. Eddy Regnier, chairperson of the Florida Council, stated that his commission is currently trying to get a development arm included in the mandate; however, acquiring government support has proven to be difficult.²² To fill the gap in financial resources, most commissions look to the philanthropic community to provide investments that would move commissions to the implementation phase. Some interviewees argue that a smart funding model at the outset of the commission, with combined government and philanthropic funding resources, would increase the potential for success and long-term impact. Another proposed idea was to create a venue for commissions to come together and discuss various funding models and their effectiveness.

3. Create communications strategies to effectively communicate an agenda to the public and nurture public support.

As Lauren Casteel, vice president of the Denver Foundation's Philanthropic Partnerships Department put it "Sometimes people see commissions as another barrier for the community; as a barrier in having voice."²³ Many interviewees mentioned this challenge and discussed strategies for using media as a way to inform the community of the commission's agenda, its efforts, and major wins in order to garner community trust and leverage community support. In The State of Black Male Commissions (2010) report Loren Harris identified strong public relations as a key to a commission's longevity. He said, "Black male commissions could more effectively develop media ties, employ media-based strategies to inform the public of their efforts and engage professionals from the media community as commission members." Engaging the media was also seen as a strategy for pushing agendas through government and keeping government officials accountable.

Most Valuable Assets of Commissions

No two commissions are exactly the same. They are often distinct in how they start, how they are composed, the issues of focus, and other noteworthy distinguishing characteristics. This report attempts to provide information to better understand the roles and impacts of commissions on improving life opportunities for males of color. The interviews, literature reviews and data gathering for this report evidenced a broad variety of characteristics, approaches, and strategies employed by commissions targeting males of color. However, there is a set of identifiable common assets that commissions generally or ideally exhibit:

1. Multisector Composition – Community solutions are often composed in silos. Commissions, particularly ones that exemplify the characteristics of a "Balanced Table," provide a venue where multiple sectors are mutually vested and accountable to working collectively to improve life opportunities of males of color. There are few tables that are ready-made for philanthropy, public sector, practitioners, and advocates to advance an agenda collectively. The best examples of commissions are ones where the table is populated by a diverse composition of participants.

2. Proximity AND Independence – A key component to advancing any agenda is access to decisionmakers.

Decisionmakers, particularly elected leaders, are, at their best, stewards of the public's trust and interests, and, in worst-case scenarios, purveyors of personal agendas and interests of self-preservation. One of the most notable assets of commissions also represents one of their greatest vulnerabilities. Commissions often have the benefit of the vested interest of the political leaders who "commission" these entities via executive order or legislation. When commissions are initiated by policymakers, they inherently have the opportunity to strategically utilize the access and political capital that

accompany their sponsors. However, the challenge is that the political interests of the sponsoring legislators or officials can outweigh the primary goal of the commission itself. Thus, the best examples and road map for effective commissions balance the asset of their proximity to decisionmakers, while maintaining independence from elected officials or bureaucracies that can limit or subvert the commission's strategies and tactics.

3. Commissions Rooted in Local Context – It is near impossible to move the needle on particular issues or for a specific population without understanding the local context. One of the greatest assets of a commission is that it can use a

Table Narrative	Pros	Cons
Balanced Table	Mutual accountability and investment between commission members and the community is encouraged and seen as an asset.	May be slow and arduous because the process requires constant communication, consensus, and active participation from all parties.
Leased Table	Because the commission is created through executive or legislative action, the ability to directly impact policy change is significant.	Commission's agenda, actions, and reach are influenced, and potentially limited, by the executive and legislative bodies that created it, providing members with only partial control.
Kitchen Table	Serves as a connecting point and communication hub for multiple sectors. Provides resources for knowledge exchange, coalition and alliance building, and advocacy, including data, training, and programming.	The commission's investment in connecting members of government, community, and philanthropy can potentially inhibit its ability to focus on one main issue, or deeply affect one particular area of concern.
Broad and Narrow Tables	Whether multi-issue or singularly focused, these commissions are custom-fitted to directly address the population(s) and issue(s) identified in a particular region or community.	A commission that acts as a Broad Table could be concerned with too many issues, and not make a deep impact in any one area. A commission that acts as a Narrow Table could possibly be too focused on one area to affect other related issues and concerns.
Reincarnated Table	Learning from previous mistakes, missteps, and unsuccessful strategies, these commissions can reassess and reorganize based on previous attempts to change life outcomes for males of color.	Because the commission has been created before, it can be difficult to convince members, potential partners, and the community that this attempt to affect males of color will be successful and different.
Missing Table	These new commissions could lead the way in rethinking and reorganizing commission-based work, and could influence populations of males that are not yet targeted.	These commissions do not exist yet, limiting the impact that could be made in the life outcomes for males of color.



localized lens to look at the social, political, and economic factors influencing the population it is targeting. Members of the commission can understand the significance of such things as local culture, language differences, histories of people and places, the complexities of the school system, city and state business needs, and zoning and land issues, because they are also members of local communities. The commission has access to some of the data that may fall through the cracks as an organized body moves from a local context to a broader context, or some of the important particulars lost as one moves from a local agenda to a national one.

Lessons Learned/Recommendations for Grantmakers

Central to the research of this report was the guiding question, “What can philanthropic institutions committed to males of color learn from these commissions, and what opportunities exist to support these organized tables in advancing policy and effective practice?” Using data from the interviews with commission representatives and funders, we offer the following four recommendations to grantmakers committed to affecting life outcomes for males of color, specifically through their support of commissions targeting these groups.

1. Create a venue(s) where commissions can share best practices and lessons learned.

Almost everyone interviewed felt that it was important for commissions to be able to share information, connect within and across state lines, and engage in discussions about how best to advocate for policy change. In fact, each interviewee suggested that the creation of such a venue was imperative for increasing commissions’ potential of future success. Specifically, interviewees called for venues to discuss the following topics:

- a. Moving agendas and working with government: how commissions can work with their local and state government to move agendas and get their voice heard;
- b. National partnerships: how to connect a commission’s best practices with that of national bodies, and align their agendas with national policy priorities;
- c. Sustainability: how to settle on the right funding model and develop a plan for sustainability;
- d. Fund development: how to educate the commission about ways they can establish relationships with the funding community;
- e. Capacity building: how the commissions can assist their community partners in creating a space for community leaders to share information; learn how to approach


legislative bodies; understand policy and the ways it influences their lives; understand how to advocate and bring about systemic change; measure and document the impact of their community work; and network with one another.

2. Target interventions.

Although many interviewees saw the benefits of investing in organized bodies that are issue-based, several emphasized the need for philanthropic work that targets specific populations. One of these advocates, Christopher Chatmon, Director of OUSD’s African American Male Achievement Task Force, discussed the significance of targeting strategies in the realm of education. “Through a universal structure or framework some of the kids are left out. Targeting the ones that are left out the most helps all the children in that district get better. In another country this [current state of education] would be a crisis, but we are not responding as if this is a crisis. Targeting Black males will help all of us. I always say to myself ‘Let’s leverage this department to help other communities of color and find the processes and best practices that will improve the future for other communities.’”²⁴

Chatmon’s comments illustrate the need for the philanthropic community to ask questions about race and gender, and assess who is being served by their investments. Frequently, it is incumbent upon the community organization or grantee to make the case for racialized and gendered interventions, as they must ask these questions to understand what is happening in their communities, and how their work will affect the community. By not focusing on race and gender, it is possible that funders are supporting great work, but not directly reaching the populations they wish to serve. As one interviewee put it, “We oftentimes do diversity in talk, but not necessarily in practice.”²⁵ Many of the funders and commission representatives interviewed for this report want to push the philanthropic community to also ask these questions about race and gender. More specifically, interviewees suggested that the boards of philanthropic agencies become increasingly committed to pushing for research and analyses around race and gender. Kelly S. Woodland, Program Officer of the William Penn Foundation, argued, “There needs to be more research explaining why race and gender are important. There needs to be a report on racialized and gendered best practices and it needs to make it to the mainstream, so everyone in the philanthropic community reads it, including staff members and board members.”²⁶ Most interviewees believed that a focus on these questions would help funders ensure that their investments are successfully affecting the communities they serve and generating the change they want to see.

3. Designate philanthropic resources to support activation strategies.

While all interviewees saw value in documenting the disparities related to the life outcomes of males of color, and in collecting data about best practices used to deal with these barriers, some interviewees called for philanthropic resources to support activation strategies that could supplement this research. As one interviewee put it, “Data has always been collected and we know the best practices, but it’s about building the collective will and deconstructing these structures that perpetuate racism.”²⁷ This gap in support for activation strategies was demonstrated in at least two ways: (1) commissions spent a great deal of time and capacity resources identifying problems and disparities that had already been published in past reports, making it difficult for them to press forward into the implementation stage; and (2) commissions made policy recommendations without having the resources to activate them. Interviewees saw philanthropic support for this shift from identifying and documenting disparities to putting best practices into action as vital for the success of commissions’ work. 

References

²² Interview, August 8, 2011.

²³ Interview, August 8, 2011.

²⁴ Interview, July 26, 2011.

²⁵ Interview, August 11, 2011.

²⁶ Interview, August 12, 2011.

²⁷ Interview, August 8, 2011.

(Table Narratives continued from page 12)

⁶ Interview, August 8, 2011.

⁷ Interview, August 8, 2011.

⁸ Interview, August 8, 2011.

⁹ Interview, July 25, 2011.

¹⁰ Interview, August 4, 2011.

¹¹ AMEN: African American Empowerment Network. No pages. Retrieved from <http://www.louisvilleky.gov/Health/equity/AMEN.htm>

¹² Interview, August 8, 2011.

¹³ Interview, July 25, 2011.

¹⁴ Interview, July 26, 2011.

¹⁵ City of Philadelphia. (2011). *Mayor Nutter signs executive order reestablishing Mayor's Commission on African-American Males*. Retrieved from <http://cityofphiladelphia.wordpress.com/2011/09/16/mayor-nutter-signs-executive-order-reestablishing-mayor%E2%80%99s-commission-on-African-American-males/>

¹⁶ Washington, L., Trower, L., & Taliaferro, N. (2011). *Black men in crisis: The agenda*. Philadelphia, PA: Father's Day Rally Committee.

¹⁷ The Pew Charitable Trusts. (2011). *A city transformed: The racial and ethnic changes in Philadelphia over the last 20 Years*. Retrieved from http://www.pewtrusts.org/news_room_detail.aspx?id=85899360321

¹⁸ These commissions and offices included The Commission of Native American Affairs (Iowa); The Greater Tulsa Area Hispanic Affairs Commission (Oklahoma); The Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commission (Oklahoma); The Native American Task Force (Oklahoma); and The Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission.

¹⁹ Interview, August 8, 2011.

²⁰ Interview, August 8, 2011.

²¹ Interview, August 8, 2011.



Concluding Thoughts

The mission of GCYF's Healthy Men, Healthy Communities is to increase the strategic investment of philanthropic dollars to improve the disproportionately negative life outcomes of men and boys of color and/or those who live in rural and urban areas. The goal is to resource the philanthropic sector with information and research, relationships and partnerships, promising practices and unsuccessful strategies, that advance their capacities and commitments to investing in positive life outcomes for males of color. This report attempts to describe commissions as just one example of local entities mobilized to influence the landscape of opportunity for males of color via policy interventions, promising program strategies, and relevant applicable research. The hope is that funders will find this overview of commissions as a valuable contribution to the landscape of the males of color field.

Here, commissions are described as “tables” because they offer an apt visual representation of entities where collaboration, change, and ideas are conceived and consumed. This metaphor enables readers to explore how multiple entities with varied missions and structures come together, exchange ideas, and organize as a coherent unit to impact the lives of males of color.

In this way, philanthropic agencies can assess how these organized tables act as effective venues for addressing disparities experienced by males of color. These tables include:

- The Balanced Table, where policymakers and a community constituency balance the stakeholders who comprise the commission, creating a mutual and shared accountability construct and culture;
- The Leased Table, where the commission's governance, priorities, and reach are potentially augmented or in other cases limited by the fact that they were created by elected officials whose offices hold considerable influence or boundaries to the commission's agenda;

- The Kitchen Table, where the commissions serve as a connecting point for various members of the philanthropic, advocacy, direct service, research, and public sectors;
- The Broad and Narrow Tables, where commissions are targeted on the population, broad in their issue focus, and in other instances where commissions are very narrowly focused on one aspect of reducing disparities among males of color;
- The Reincarnated Tables, where the commissions are in their second or third life and building upon previous attempts to mobilize a similar entity to improve life outcomes for males of color;
- The Missing Tables, where commissions don't exist; for example, commissions targeting Native American males, Asian/Pacific Islander males, or Latino males specifically and exclusively.

Most notably, this report attempts to provide philanthropic agencies with information that can be used to organize, create, assess, and reestablish commissions; or, in other words, “set the table” for commission-based work that will positively impact the lives of males of color. How might philanthropy become a more active and vocal entity sitting at the commission table? As noted in the Foreword of this report, philanthropy has been slowly gaining momentum in building infrastructure and increasing its investments to reduce the disparate life outcomes of males of color. Commissions provide clear opportunities and potential challenges to advancing this work, and the hope is that philanthropy finds opportunities to connect, challenge, and support these entities. Healthy Men, Healthy Communities believes commissions can play an important role in strengthening the civic and public sectors' infrastructure. This will aid in combating systemic barriers to improved life outcomes among males of color, particularly with philanthropy as a partner. This GCYF initiative is committed to being a resource for philanthropy by encouraging increased and more strategic investments in strategies targeting this population. ✨

Appendix A: Highlights of Healthy Men, Healthy Communities Past Activities

Building Relationships

- GCYF continued to build new relationships with key administration and congressional staff (i.e., departments of Education and Justice; White House Domestic Policy Office; Housing and Urban Development [HUD]; and Health and Human Services). GCYF continues to cultivate these relationships, create others, and serve as a resource to administration and congressional staff. For example, at the request of the departments of Justice and Education, GCYF convenes quarterly calls with the philanthropic sector and senior agency staff to discuss youth violence prevention. GCYF also hosts similar calls with HUD discussing homelessness and rebuilding communities and the economy.

Publishing Newsletters, Reports, and Monographs

- GCYF continues to publish the monthly *Healthy Men, Healthy Communities* newsletter, devoted to the latest news and reports in men's health and well-being. Each issue also includes the latest policy developments as well as a featured article written by a noted expert such as Ron Ashford, director, Public Housing Supportive Services, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; James Rodriguez, CEO and president of Fathers & Families Coalition of America, Inc.; and Dr. Jermane Bond, director, Commission on Paternal Involvement in Pregnancy Outcomes and Research Associate, Health Policy Institute, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.
- Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families, "Successful Strategies and Innovative Ideas to Increase Economic Opportunities for Children, Youth and Families." *Making the Link*, July 2011.
- Iruka, I.U., & De Marco, A. "Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: A Social Equity Strategy?" *Making the Link*, September 2011.
- Lesley, B. "Medicaid: A Lifeline to Health Coverage for Nearly 30 Million of America's Most Vulnerable Children." *Making the Link*, August 2011.
- Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families. *The State of Children, Youth & Families: Pulse Check-Opportunities and*

Challenges in the Current Congress, Silver Spring, MD:

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- Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families. *Communities of Color and the New Economy: Successful Strategies and Innovative Ideas to Increase Economic Opportunities for Children, Youth and Families*, Silver Spring, MD: Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families; Fall 2011.
- Brown, R., Etheart, Y.H., & Villarosa, L. "Is There a Climate of Diversity and Inclusivity in Philanthropy?" *Policy Perspectives*, September 2011.
- Van Alst, J.W. "Working Cars for Working Families" *Making the Link*, April 2011.

Hosting Learning Events

- In October of 2010, GCYF co-convened *Funder's Briefing on Federal Efforts to Increase Responsible Fatherhood and Strengthen Families* in Washington, DC, which included presentations from the Obama Administration and other key government officials.
- GCYF senior staff participated in the 2011 National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention's Summit on Preventing Youth Violence. At the request of the Department of Education, GCYF coordinated ongoing engagement and follow up opportunities for the private sector, including hosting quarterly calls for funders with the Departments of Education and Justice. In 2012, GCYF again participated in the Summit, this time as a presenter and co-developer of a philanthropic session. At the Summit, GCYF also hosted an invitation-only lunch with Bryan Samuels, commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, who discussed the impact of trauma on youth who have been exposed to violence. Specifically, Commissioner Samuels focused on opportunities for philanthropy to engage in multidisciplinary partnerships and support interventions that promote healing, recovery, and healthy interpersonal functioning among vulnerable youth. Moreover, at the Summit, GCYF released a white paper written by Sue Badeau, senior fellow, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency, that discussed how grantmakers could support youth violence prevention efforts.



- In 2011, GCYF hosted its 2nd Biennial GCYF Policy Summit, *Communities of Color and the New Economy: Successful Strategies and Innovative Ideas to Increase Economic Opportunities for Children, Youth, and Families*. This Summit included a session on *Building Healthy Men, Healthy Communities* which was moderated by William Buster, program director at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The featured speaker was Rhonda Tsoi-A-Fatt, senior policy analyst at CLASP. At the end of the month, GCYF wrote and released a report summarizing the Summit including recommendations and next steps. The release of the report was accompanied by a webinar in July.
- GCYF and The California Endowment hosted a networking brunch at Grantmakers in Health (GIH) 2011 Annual Meeting on Health Philanthropy in Los Angeles. Participants learned about new approaches the children, youth, and family philanthropic sector is taking to address the needs of vulnerable children and communities. Also at the GIH conference, GCYF and The California Endowment hosted a workshop, *Healing the Hurt: Improving the Health of Young Men of Color*. During this workshop, panelists examined how place and social factors directly affect and lead to health disparities among Black and Hispanic boys, and discussed the importance of health care providers identifying the effects of trauma in patient care.
- GCYF's executive director and Thinking Man Consulting took part in an engaging and interactive session, *Investing in Men and Boys of Color: Opportunities for Philanthropy*, on March 17, 2011, to discuss the impact of philanthropic investment in men and boys of color over the past several years. This event was hosted by Philanthropy New York.
- The GCYF 2011 Annual Conference, *What Counts and What Works: People, Practice, and Policy*, provided a forum for grantmakers to explore not only the most pressing and emerging social, economic, and environmental trends affecting children, youth, and families, but also the role that private philanthropy plays in lifting the people in our communities to survive and thrive. More specifically, the Conference featured a number of events devoted to issues related to HMHC including:

Pre-Conference Institutes:

- Place Matters: Strengthening Communities Through Place-Based Philanthropy
- Innovative and Comprehensive Strategies for Improving Outcomes for Men and Boys of Color

Plenaries:

- Trends for the Future
- What Works, What Doesn't, What's Missing
- Building Public Will for Children, Youth, and Families
- The State of the Future for Children, Youth, and Families


HMHC Funder's Network Breakfast:

- The Healthy Men, Healthy Communities Breakfast, featured speaker: Brenden Anderson, special assistant to the executive director of the Oakland Unified School District's African American Male Achievement Task Force

Conference Sessions:

- A Way Out of No Way: How the Black Men and Boys Wellness Movement Is Creating Opportunities
- Engaging Parents From the Start: Improving Outcomes for the Youngest Latino Children
- How the Los Angeles Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project Created Community Partnerships to Prevent Child Maltreatment: The Road to Success

Offsite Sessions:

- Youth Learning to Lead in Business, Community, and Civic Settings
- Living Together, Worlds Apart: Innovative Strategies to Strengthen Neighborhoods
- Making the Transition to College: What Districts and Community Colleges Can Do and Student Perspectives on What Works 

Appendix B: Commission Profiles

Name	African American Male Unemployment Task Force
Location	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Established	2010
Population served	African American males
Issues	Unemployment
Mission	To decrease unemployment rate for Black males in Milwaukee. The task force is currently on hold, and will be in the process of rebuilding in 2012.
Major wins	Getting jobs for 150 Black men in the fish and urban farming industries in Milwaukee through Growing Power, Inc.
Contact person	Aldermen Ashanti Hamilton and Tony Zielinski, Co-Chairs
Web site	Not available
Activity	On hold

Name	The College Board's Advocacy & Policy Center
Location	New York, New York
Established	2010
Population served	Young males of color
Issues	Education
Mission	To help transform education in America. The Center focuses on making critical connections between policy, research, and real-world practice to develop innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges in education today.
Major wins	Release of <i>The Educational Experience of Young Men of Color: A Review in Research, Pathways, and Progress</i> (2011). In its first week of publication, this report received more than 100,000 downloads.
Contact person	John Michael Lee, Jr., Policy Director
Web site	http://youngmenofcolor.collegeboard.org
Activity	Still active

Name	Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men & Boys
Location	Tallahassee, Florida; although representatives are from all over the state of Florida
Established	2007
Population served	Black men and boys
Issues	Multi-issue
Mission	To identify and assist with the implementation of programs and services that will improve the lives of Black men and boys through sound practices in the fields of education, health, family, economics, and criminal justice.
Major wins	(1) Made strides in removing some of the zero-tolerance policies in schools, which have been shown to disproportionately affect Black boys. (2) Increased awareness of discrepancies in judiciary sentencing between White men and Black men.
Contact person	Dr. Eddy M. Regnier, Chair
Web site	http://www.cssbmb.com
Activity	Still active



Name	Illinois Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men
Location	Chicago, Illinois; but members represented various regions throughout the state
Established	2009
Population served	African American men
Issues	Multi-issue
Mission	To develop strategies aimed at improving the lives of Black men, particularly around key issues such as incarceration rates, education, economic earnings, and child welfare. The task force was not active at the time of this report's publication.
Major wins	Published a detailed examination of African American males' experiences throughout the state in its 2009 report titled, <i>A Closer Look: An Examination of African American Men in Illinois</i> .
Contact person	Terence Mitchell, Former Chair
Web site	Not available
Activity	Not active because of lack of established funding and change in leadership.

Name	Oakland Unified School District's African American Male Achievement Task Force
Location	Oakland, California
Established	2009
Population served	African American males in Oakland school system
Issues	Education
Mission	To use existing best practices to make measurable progress for Black males by increasing the rates of graduation, attendance, and literacy; decreasing the achievement gap, and rates of suspension and incarceration; and improving the academic performance of middle and high school students.
Major wins	(1) Created the Thriving Students web site, which details the task force's mission and 5-year strategic plan for measuring performance and success for African American males. (2) Partnered with members of Question Bridge, an innovative transmedia art program, to train high school youth to interview middle school kids about their educational experiences as Black males in Oakland. This qualitative data will inform the quantitative data that will measure the success of the 5-year strategic plan.
Contact person	Christopher Chatmon, Director
Web site	http://www.thrivingstudents.org/5
Activity	Still active

Name	Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Location	Columbus, Ohio; the board's geographic diversity is mandated by statute, but commissioners serve the entire state of Ohio.
Established	1977
Population served	Diverse Latino communities across the state
Issues	Multi-issue
Mission	To advise the governor, Ohio General Assembly, and state government agencies on all matters affecting Hispanic Ohioans; connect diverse Latino communities throughout the state; and build the capacity of Latino community organizations.
Major wins	(1) Created the Latino Community Network, as part of the commission's mission to be the definitive hub for information of and about Hispanic Ohioans. An important aspect of the network is OLANet, a virtual community where more than 250 Hispanic and Hispanic-serving community organizations can share information about funding opportunities, build partnerships, and post important events, and is where the commission posts weekly policy briefs to teach the community about policies that will affect them and the people they work with. (2) Organized annual Legislative Visit Days, where 50 to 100 leaders from all over the state have the opportunity to meet with legislatures, as an effort to promote civic engagement and train Latino leaders to successfully present their economic and political agendas.
Contact person	Lilliena Cavanaugh, Executive Director
Web site	http://ochla.ohio.gov/index.aspx
Activity	Still active

Name	Marginalized Males Workforce and Education Consortium, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation
Location	Little Rock, Arkansas; although the consortium works with higher education institutions and community organizations throughout the state of Arkansas
Established	2008
Population served	African American, Latino, and low-income White males who are having trouble connecting to the labor market and educational opportunities
Issues	Job opportunities and education
Mission	To support the development of higher education and community programs focused on retention and graduation rates for marginalized males in Arkansas. Current grantees include Arkansas Baptist College; Philander Smith College; P.A.R.K. (Positive Atmosphere Reaches Kids); The STAND Foundation, Inc.; and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.
Major wins	(1) Increased statewide and national awareness and advocacy around education barriers for marginalized males, including statewide media coverage in newspapers and magazines. (2) Partnered with national organizations including Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Kiwanis Camp to help address the education barriers for marginalized males.
Contact person	Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation—Cory S. Anderson, Vice President, and Angela Kramers, Senior Associate of Education
Web site	http://www.wrfoundation.org/moving-the-needle/emerging-work.html
Activity	Still active

Appendix C: Approach/Methodology

Before the *The State of Black Male Commissions* report, no official study of these commissions had been published. The approach employed for that report was similar to that of investigative reporting or genealogical research. However, for this report, the research team was able to benefit from previous analyses, utilize connections and relationships that had been nurtured since then, and learn valuable insights from commissions that had experienced change over the past year and a half.

The research team began by completing an Internet scan for men of color commissions in urban cities and rural towns in the five major regions of the country (South, Northeast, Midwest, Southwest, and West). This Internet research was conducted on 30 states, including cities in 20 states identified as having large Native American/Native Alaskan or Hispanic populations by the 2010 U.S. Census.

In each identified location, a common approach as well as consistent language was used in searching for commissions. A list of existing boards and commissions on the city web site was the first point of contact, followed by a general search of the web site using a combination of language including: *commission; initiative; task force; program; male; men; Black; African American; Hispanic; Latinos; Native American; Indigenous American; American Indian; Asian*. While searching government web sites, if no results were found at the city level, the research was expanded to the county, the surrounding metropolitan area, and the state using the same methods. Finally, if no commissions were found, a general Internet search was conducted using the previously used language.

After an initial Internet scan for men of color commissions throughout the country, the research team concluded that there was a large gap in the number of commissions that specifically focused on males in the Latino, Native American, and Asian and Pacific Islander communities. As mentioned previously, researchers connected with several organizations in an attempt to identify any connections with men of color commissions; however, none were found. As a result, two commission-like entities were included in this research.

The commissions and commission-like entities that are highlighted here are:

- Marginalized Males Workforce and Education Consortium, multicounty, Arkansas

- Oakland Unified School District's African American Male Achievement Task Force, Oakland, California
- Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men & Boys, multicounty, Florida
- Illinois Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men, multicounty, Illinois
- The College Board's Advocacy & Policy Center, national organization, New York
- Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, multicounty, Ohio
- African American Male Unemployment Task Force, Milwaukee, Wisconsin


Representatives from each of these commissions participated in semistructured phone interviews, where the questions focused on:

1. Origins and Membership: how the commission started, if there was a particular catalyst behind it, and how membership was granted;
2. Funding: sources and level of funding, funding needs;
3. Partnerships and Networks: successful partnerships with other commissions and/or community organizations; relationship with the philanthropic community;
4. Successes: what the commission has accomplished and its impact on men of color;
5. Challenges and Barriers: identifying practical and theoretical challenges to doing work affecting men and boys of color, and biggest resource needs in doing this targeted work.

The commissions that appear in this report are included because they represent a diversity of experiences based on geography, population, structure, governance, stated mission, and life cycle (emerging/established). The commissions profiled were chosen to demonstrate the various origins, scopes, and stages of the life cycle these entities may have. Although this report on males of color commissions does not intend to be exhaustive, the profiling of this small sample of commissions leads us to a rich and complex understanding of their best practices, and enables us to understand how these practices impact men of color on a community level and through policy.

When deciding which members of the philanthropic community to speak with for this report, the research team

purposely targeted funders who have previously made investments in supporting the outcomes of males of color. These funders already understand why it is important to invest in males of color, so their perspective is one that acknowledges the vulnerabilities of this particular population. Funders participated in semistructured phone conversations covering topics similar to those in the commissions' interviews; however, these interviews

focused more specifically on the relationship between commissions and the philanthropic community. The perspectives of these funders proves invaluable as it provides insight into the relationship between men of color commissions and the philanthropic community, while offering up recommendations for other grantmakers interested in improving the life outcomes for these men and boys. 



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